(a) whether Government have made any attempt to assess the damage caused by Tsunami calamity to tourism infrastructure in the eastern coastline of India;

(b) whether Government have drawn up any crash-programme for re-building the tourism resorts in the eastern coast damaged by Tsunami waves;

(c) whether Government propose to utilise a part of the Tsunami relief fund/aid for re-building the tourism infrastructure alongwith affected areas; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The development of infrastructure is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments/Union Territories. The Ministry of Tourism assists State Governments/Union Territories by providing Central financial assistance for tourism projects and infrastructure based on specific proposals submitted by the State Governments/Union Territories.

A Core Group constituted by the Government, functioning in the Planning Commission is looking into the long term plans for rehabilitation of infrastructure damaged in the recent Tsunami.

Talks with representatives of Agricultural sector

2290. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have invited and held talks with representatives of agricultural sector to ascertain their point of view regarding the budget 2005-06;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the representatives have suggested that provisions should be made in the budget for increasing employment opportunities; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(d) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto and the action being taken for the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Finance Minister met eminent agricultural economists, agricultural researchers, and representatives of co-operative banks and agricultural commodity organisations for pre-budget consultations on 11th January, 2005.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The representatives had *inter alia* suggested measures for creating employment opportunities. The Union Budget for 2005-06 has allocated Rs. 11,000 crore (comprising a provision of cash component of Rs. 5,400 crore and 50 lakh MT of foodgrains) compared to Rs. 4,020 crore in 2004-05(RE) for the National Food for Work Programme launched in November, 2004. The Government's intention is to convert this programme into the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme.

The Budget for 2005-06 has also announced various measures for rural and agricultural development and attached highest attention for the development of various sectors with potential for employment generation such as agriculture through enhanced irrigation facilities, food processing industry, textile sector, information technology and construction.

Development of Chitradurga Fort area

2291. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether her Ministry has received any proposal from the State Government of Karnataka to develop Chitradurga Fort area under Destination Development Scheme;

(b) if so, the status of the project; and

(c) by when the necessary approval is likely to be given to the said project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The project for integrated development of Chitradurga Fort in Karnataka has been sanctioned for central financial assistance of Rs. 353.00 lakhs during the current financial year,

(c) Does not arise.